Subsidising Wheat Exports

162. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to subsidise wheat exports to make it competitive;

(b) if so, the extent of subsidy to be given; and

(c) whether open market import of wheat has stopped?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) Government is carrying excessive wheat stocks in relation to buffer norms. In view of normal wheat crop, liquidation of excessive stocks has become necessary. Export of wheat can be one way of liquidating stocks. Ruling prices of wheat in India being high as compared to international prices, the export potential is extremely bleak unless it is subsidized, the extent of which will vary from transaction to transaction depending upon the market conditions.

(c) The open market import of wheat has been checked as a result of the imposition of 50% duty on wheat imports.

Storage of Reserve of Food Stock

163. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are faced with the problem of storage of huge reserves of food stocks;

(b) whether private sector has been involved in storing this year; and

(c) if so, the details in the regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) No, Sir.

Adequate storage capacity exists with the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC), the State Warehousing Corporations (SWC) and other State agencies for storage of foodgrains. Besides, the field officers of FCI have been delegated full powers to hire additional storage capacity as and when necessary.

(b) and (c) FCI also hiring storage capacity from private sector for storage of foodgrains. As on 1.1.2000, FCI has hired 57.04 Lakh MT from Private sector.

Monitoring of FPSs by Panchayats

164. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to involve panchayats to monitor the fair price shops all over the country; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, Implementation of Public Distribution System (PDS) in the joint responsibility of the Central Government and the State Government/UT Administrations. The Administration of the PDS including distribution of the PDS commodities to the consumers through fair price shops is the responsibility of the State Government/UT Administrations Based on the belief truly democratic institution do better safeguard, than the State bureaucracy the Government has sought more substantial involvement of Gram Panchayats in the supervision and monitoring of PDS specially at the Fair Price Shops (FPS) level as a measure of social audit. Under the guidelines for implementation of TPDS State Governments were asked to involve Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas in the identification of eligible families below poverty line